

# Weekly Progress Roundup

Global suicides are down, Waymo keeps on growing, a gene therapy healed deaf children, and more.

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## Global suicides are down


The global suicide rate fell nearly 40 percent between 1990 and 2021, according to a [recent analysis](#) from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. East Asia and Western Europe saw the largest declines of 66 percent and 41 percent, respectively.

While this progress was widespread, it was not universal. Specifically, it seems to have skipped over South, Central, and North America, the only regions that experienced a rising suicide rate.

Note that these figures are age-standardized, meaning the rates are adjusted to account for differences in age distribution between populations.


## Waymo looks unstoppable


Waymo is relentlessly expanding its service. The company now delivers [over 200,000 robotaxi rides](#) per week, up from 100,000 back in August and 10,000 just two years ago. Their rapid growth promises a significant improvement in human mobility and, to the extent that robotaxi rides substitute for human-driven trips, road safety.

 **Waymo Drivers Are Way Safer (10x) Than Humans**  
GALE POOLEY · JAN 11  
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We can also expect their expansion to continue. In August, there were only around 700 vehicles in Waymo's fleet. Thousands are now gathering in their Phoenix factory.

[AC Website] Waymo Factory Drone Footage Copy link



Watch on  YouTube

## A gene therapy enhanced deaf children's hearing

In a [recent trial](#), a gene therapy from Regeneron improved hearing in 10 out of 11 children with congenital deafness.

The participants all suffered from impaired hearing thanks to a mutation in a specific gene. In the trial, researchers delivered a working copy of that gene via a virus injected into the inner ear. While there were some unpleasant side effects, like nausea and vomiting, all the children had recovered after around six days. Three had their hearing improve to at least "nearly normal" levels.

## Artificial intelligence is creating beautiful ornaments

A company called Not Quite Past has found a particularly charming use for generative AI: [creating decorative tiles](#). The images, inspired by [Delftware](#), are designed by artificial intelligence and then printed on ceramic in a factory. The tiles cost around 10 pounds sterling each, and customers can pick from premade options or generate their own unique designs.

Speaking to *The Spectator*, one of the co-founders said he was inspired by [Josiah Wedgwood](#), the 18th-century potter and entrepreneur who first brought mass-produced decorative ceramics to everyday people.



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